तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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PRACTICE THEN PREACH

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Our business is to raise ourselves to the highest status of life as preachers of Krishna's message. One should behave rigidly, then he should instruct others. Two things: Be exemplary, and then teach others to be exemplary. If one has not come to that high standard, he cannot judge or criticize others. There is a saying in the Bible, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." How we can preach unless we are qualified to make judgments? That will not be possible. Only those who are above suspicion can judge others. One himself must act in such a way that he is always above suspicions. Then he can judge, then he can preach. But now you have no power to instruct. One who is not following himself, how he can instruct others?

— Letter 17 December 1972.

SIMPLICITY AND FAITH

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja
From an evening program in Lansing, Michigan, USA, 28 October 1991

Gopal and the Schoolboy

A mother had a small six- or seven-year-old son. She wanted to admit him into primary school so that he could get some education, but the school was a little far away, half a mile from their house. Still she told the boy that he should go to school every morning.

So, the boy started going. On the path to school he had to pass through a jungle where there were some ferocious animals like tigers and snakes. Being a small child, he was afraid. He came to his mother and said, "Oh mother, when I was going through that jungle on the way to school I was very afraid. So many ferocious animals are there. I can't go any more."

His mother said, "Why are you afraid? Don't you know that your friend Gopal is there? Just call your friend, He will help you. You need not be afraid."

"Oh, my friend is there?"

"Yes. When you feel afraid you should call out, 'Oh my friend Gopal, I am in a fearful situation! Where are You? Please come!' You should say like that."

The child followed her instruction. When he was passing through the jungle and he felt afraid, he called out, "Friend Gopal! My brother Gopal! Where are You? I am in a fearful situation. Please come! Help me!"

Gopal appeared before him. "Yes, I am here. Why are you afraid?"

"I have to go through the jungle to go to school and it is full of ferocious animals."

"Don't fear. Come with Me!"

Gopal was helping him every day.

Milk from Gopal

In Indian schools they perform *gaṇeṣa-pūjā* and *sarasvatī-pūjā* to give the students knowledge. For these festivals, the teacher will collect some fees from the students. One day at school the teacher announced that they were going to have such a festival and that

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the students should all pay some fee. But the boy and his mother were very poor. There was nobody in that family, only the mother and the son, and they had no money.

The teacher told him, "You are poor, you don't have enough money, but you should at least bring fifty *paisa* — half of a rupee."

The child returned home and told his mother that the teacher said that he had to pay fifty *paisa* for the festival. But they had nothing, not even a single *paisa*. The mother said, "Tell the teacher that we have no money. We are very poor. But we will bring milk."

The child said, "Who will give us milk?"

"Oh, your friend Gopal will give us milk. He tends cows. He can supply as much milk as your teacher wants. Yes. You tell Gopal!"

The boy accepted what his mother said, "Yes, I must tell my friend Gopal."

So that day in the forest he called out to his friend, "O Gopal, where are You?"

"I am here." Gopal appeared. "What do you need?"

"My teacher has said that I have to pay fifty *paisa*, but we have no money. My mother said to ask You to give us some milk, because they need milk for the festival. So You must supply as much milk as they need."

"Oh yes, I must supply, I must help you. I am always here to help you."

On the *pūjā* day when he was passing through that jungle, he called his friend, "Gopal, today is the day. Please come!"

Gopal came with a small earthen pot filled with milk. "All right, take this milk. Give it to your teacher. This pot will give as much milk as they want. It will never be empty." The boy took it and gave it to the teacher.

Seeing the small pot, the teacher said, "Oh, this is just a small amount of milk. We need a large amount, ten buckets of milk. You have only brought a small pot."

"No, no, no. It will never be empty. You bring ten buckets and pour this pot out. All ten buckets will be filled."

The teacher did so, and, amazingly, ten buckets were filled. Then the teacher asked, "Where did you get such a pot?"

"My friend Gopal gave me."

"Your friend Gopal? Who is He?"

"Oh, He stays in the jungle. Every time I need, I call Him. My mother told me that whenever I am in a fearful situation I should call out, 'Gopal! Gopal! O brother! O my friend Gopal!' Then He appears. He helps me, protects me, and leads me to school. He gave this pot of milk. He says that He is a friend to one and all." Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29), *suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ* — "I am the only well-wishing friend of all living entities."

"He says He is not only my friend, He is a friend to one and all. If one calls, He is there ready to help in time of danger, in time of need, in time of calamities."

Why Doesn't Gopal Come to You?

Such a simple child gets help from Krishna. But you are worrying, he is worrying, she is worrying, "What shall I do? What shall I do? I need so much money. How can I do it? I cannot collect. I have to do this thing. I have to do that thing. I have so many problems, so many hindrances, so many obstacles."

Why don't you ask Gopal? Gopal is ready to help you, but you are not asking Him. If you are asking, then why is Gopal not coming? You say, "Yes, yes. I am asking, 'O Krishna! O Krishna! Please help me, please help me!' But Krishna is not coming and helping me."

Gopal immediately appeared before that small child. Why can't you get Gopal's help? Why doesn't Gopal come to you? What is the difficulty? What is the reason? It's because you have no faith in Gopal, no faith in Krishna. It is a question of faith. That small child had strong faith. As soon as his mother told him he put strong unflinching faith in her words, and he got Krishna. But you do not have faith.

Now in America, many, many people have lost faith. In his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15) Srila Rupa Goswami says, *ādau śraddhā*, the first thing is unflinching faith. Similarly, Krishna says in *Gītā* (4.39):

śraddhāvāl labhate jñānaṁ tat-paraḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ
jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śāntim acireṇādhigacchati

A faithful man who is dedicated to transcendental knowledge and who subdues his senses is eligible to achieve such knowledge, and having achieved it he quickly attains the supreme spiritual peace.

What do we mean by *śraddhā*? Rupa Goswami says that the first thing is *śraddhā*. Following that comes other things. *Śraddhā* means strong,

unflinching faith. *Bhajante māṁ dṛḍha-vratāḥ* — those who have faith, they do *bhajana* with determination. [*Bg*. 7.28]. Strong faith in what? *Sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya* // faith in what *sādhu* says, what guru says, what *śāstra* says — what Krishna says [Narottam Das Thakur's *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* 1.10]. You should put strong unflinching faith in what Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. It is said:

viśvāsa mile kṛṣṇa tarke bahu dūra

If one has faith then he can easily obtain Krishna and arguments or doubts stay far away.

Why Depressed and Disappointed?

If you have strong faith you will get Krishna. You have faith, but it is not strong. It is soft faith. At any time it can break and you feel yourself disappointed, depressed. Why such feelings? Why disappointed? Why depressed? Because you do not have strong faith in Krishna. You have no faith in *sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya*. You have lost faith, therefore you feel disappointed, and depressed.

Faith is the most important thing. It has been stressed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and all of our *ācāryas* have said it. Rupa Goswami says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15-16) that everything begins with *śraddhā*:

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ

athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

First comes *śraddhā*, faith; next *sādhu-saṅga*, association with saintly persons; after that *bhajana-kriyā*, spiritual practices; then *anartha-nivṛtti*, cessation of all offenses or obstacles; next *niṣṭhā*, firmness; which is followed by *ruci*, taste; after that *āsakti*, attachment; then *bhāva*; and then appears *prema*. These are the different stages leading to *prema's* appearance within the heart of a spiritual practitioner.

It is a gradual process. Mahaprabhu said the same thing:

ucca saṅkīrtane kari śraddhāra pracāra

Loudly chant the holy names and preach with faith.

When my *guru-mahārāja* came to the West, what did he have with him? Only strong faith in Krishna, strong faith in the words of his guru, strong faith in the holy name. He had nothing else. It is a question of strong faith in Gopal. But people are lacking faith. You have some faith, but not strong faith. You should develop strong faith. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 22.62) states:

'śraddhā'-śabde —— viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya

"*Śraddhā*" is defined as confident, firm faith that by rendering transcendental loving service to Krishna one automatically performs all subsidiary activities. Such faith is favorable to the discharge of devotional service.

Chant Loudly!

If you develop *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* all of your duties and obligations are finished. You are thinking, "This is my duty, my responsibility, to look after the maintenance of my family, my wife and my children. But it is said, *kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya* — "All of your work is finished." Everyone says this, but they are only speaking from the lips. In their heart, 99.9% people have no faith. Therefore Gauranga Mahaprabhu has said, *ucca saṅkīrtane kari śraddhāra pracāra* — "Chant loudly: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.* Inculcate *śraddhā*, faith, unto those people who have not developed *śraddhā*."

My *guru-mahārāja* did that. When he first arrived here he came with only a pair of *karatālas*. He simply went to a park and chanted Hare Krishna. The hippies were rolling on the ground, half-naked, taking strong drugs like LSD and marijuana, and becoming mad. My *guru-mahārāja* just played *karatālas* and chanted, and thereby he inculcated *śraddhā* in them. *Corā-veśyā-śāṭha* — the thieves, the prostitutes, and the cheaters — *sādhu* is able to inculcate *śraddhā* even into them. That is Mahaprabhu's instruction: *agre śraddhā diyā* — "First inculcate *śraddhā* unto them." Then when they are *śraddhāvān*, when they have developed *śraddhā*, strong faith in the holy name, strong faith in Krishna, and *sādhu-śāstra-guru-vākya*, then they are eligible to be initiated. There is the offense to the holy name known as *śraddhā-hīna-jane nāmopadeśa* "don't give someone *nāma-upadeśa*, instructions on chanting, if they are lacking in *śraddhā*." So *agre-śraddhā* first one must have *śraddhā*.

How can one develop *śraddhā*? That is another question — for this reason we perform loud *saṅkīrtana*. By doing so you can develop *śraddhā*. Don't feel depressed or disappointed; Mahaprabhu is there, Krishna is there, Srila Prabhupada is there. Chant loudly and fill the atmosphere with transcendental sound vibration! You should have full complete faith in the holy name, in Gopal, in Krishna and Mahaprabhu. Don't feel desperate at any time, under any circumstances. There is no question of pessimism in Mahaprabhu's movement. There is all optimism. I have seen during my tour that now this pessimism is widespread amongst the devotees in America. Seeing that, I feel very sorry. I am crying in my heart. What has happened? My *guru-mahārāja* came here first. He sowed the seed here. Now what has happened? They have lost faith — such a sorry state of affairs.

How is it that a small boy immediately developed faith and got Krishna? He cried out, "O Gopal! Where are You? My mother has said to call you!" And immediately Gopal appeared.

The Determination of Dhruva

Dhruva Maharaja was also only a child, a five-year-old boy. When he inquired from his mother Suniti, she told him, "Narayan is there. If you get the mercy of Lord Narayan then all of your desires will be fulfilled."

Dhruva said, "Yes! Lord Narayan. Where is He?"

Suniti said, "I have heard that saints and sages go to the forest to get Him."

Dhruva said, "Oh I must go! I must go and get Him!" He was only a five-year-old boy, but he had such determination.

Later, Narada Muni told him, "The forest is a very dangerous place. There are many fearful, ferocious animals here — tigers, lions, and snakes. You are a small boy, what can you do here?"

Dhruva said, "No! No! My mother said that Narayan is there. I must go and find Him. Dhruva wouldn't hear any dissuasion. He was so strong and determined! Therefore his name is Dhruva. "*Dhruva*" means "determined". His determination never shakes. Rupa Goswami therefore says in *Upadeśāmṛta* (text 3):

> *utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt*
> *saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati*

> One can execute the process of *bhakti-yoga* successfully with full-hearted enthusiasm, perseverance, and determination, by following the prescribed duties in the association of devotees and by engaging completely in activities of goodness.

Rupa Goswami, *mahājana-ācārya*, says one must have *utsāhān*, enthusiasm, and *niścayād*, determination. "Yes, I am determined to achieve this thing. I must achieve it." Dhruva had that kind of determination. But also *dhairyāt*, you must have patience. Don't lose patience. This strong determination and strong faith is most important. Nothing is impossible. Krishna is always there to help you. He is there in your heart. He will test how strong your faith is in Him. Your faith is shaking; it is not strong. How determined are you? Krishna creates everything. His will is supreme. By His mere desire creation, maintenance, and destruction take place. We are completely dependent on His will. Bhaktivinode says in *Śaraṇāgati* (3.4.7), *tomāra icchāya āchi nirbhara koriyā* — "I am completely dependent on Your will, O Krishna." So Krishna says, "Okay, I will test your faith, to see if you are really completely dependent on My will." But you are lacking faith, and Krishna knows, "Oh, he has no faith. He only speaks from the lips. In his heart he has no faith."

(To be continued in the next issue.)

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